LANDES SHEPHERDS.

French Peasants Who Are Experts In Walking on Stilts.

There is a vast district in France where the entire community goes about and transacts its business on stilts. This district is called "Les Landes."

The inhabitants, who are among the poorest peasants in France, gain their subsistence by fishing, by such little agriculture as is possible and by keeping cows and sheep. The shepherds make use of their stilts for two purposes—first, because walking is quite impossible on account of the sage and undergrowth of brush, and, second, because the height of their stilts gives them a greater range of vision.

The stilts generally are about six or seven feet high. Near the top there is a support for the foot, which has a strong stirrup and strap, and still nearer the top a band of leather fastens the stilt firmly to the leg just below the knee. Some stilts, especially those made for fancy walking and for tricks, are even higher than seven feet, and the man who uses these—and he must be an expert—can travel as fast as ten miles an hour. The lower end of this kind of stilt is capped with a sheep bone to prevent its splitting.

Some of these Landes shepherds are wonderfully clever in the management of their stilts. They run races, step or jump over brooks, clear fences and walls and are able to keep their balance and equilibrium while stooping to the ground to pick up pebbles or to gather wild flowers. They fall prone upon their faces and assume their perpendicular without an effort and in a single moment after they have thus prostrated themselves.—Technical World Magazine.

A VICTIM OF WORRY.

The Man Who Is Always Expecting Some Kind of Trouble.

There is always a cloud on his face because he is constantly expecting that something unfavorable is going to happen. There is going to be a slump in business, or he is going to have a loss, or somebody is trying to undermine him, or he is worried about his health, or fears his children will be sick or go wrong or be killed.

In other words, although he has achieved quite a remarkable success, yet he has never really had a happy day in his life. All his life this man has been chasing rainbows, thinking if he could only get a little farther on, a little higher up, he would be happy, but he is just as far from it as when a boy.

I believe this condition has all come from the habit of unhappiness which he formed during his hard boyhood and which he has never been able to overcome. He has learned to look for trouble, to expect it, and he gets it.

I have been his guest many a time. He has a beautiful home, a very charming wife, a most delightful family, but there is always the same cloud on his face, the same expression of anxiety, of unhappiness, of foreboding.

A little properly directed training in his boyhood would have changed his whole career, and he would have been a happy, joyous, harmonious man instead of being discordant and unhappy.

There is everything in starting right. What is put into the first of life is put into the whole of life.—Success Magazine.

Self Control.

The self control of the Japanese, even in times of the utmost stress, and their courtesy, which begets quietness and discretion, are both brought out by a writer in St. Paul's Magazine.

"Cry. It will do you good," I said once to a poor Japanese woman who, crouching beside her dying husband, was controlling herself with an effort that would, I feared, make her ill.

She laid her little slim brown finger upon her trembling red lip and shook her head, then whispered, "It might disturb him."

"Cry. It will do you good," I said the next day, when the man was dead and she seemed almost prostrate with grief and overenforced self control.

"It would be most rude to make a hideous noise before the sacred dead," came the soft reply.

Bread and Pipe Baker.

The lecturer at the cooking school sometimes enlivened her remarks with an anecdote.

"The eighteenth century baker," she said, "was a pipe cleaner as well, just as the barber a little earlier was a surgeon. Everybody in those days smoked clay pipes, provided the same as cups or spoons by the coffee houses. Well, each morning a waiter carried his master's stock of pipes, some hundred perhaps, to the nearest bakery. The baker would boil them, then dip them in liquid lime, then bake them dry. They came out of the oven as sweet and white as new."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Degrees of Hunger.

"I'm simply starving!" cried the short story writer at the Hungry club. "I wish they'd begin dinner."

"I never saw you when you weren't starving," said the poet.

"I'm never as hungry as you are, though," the short story writer declared, "because I write prose."—New York Press.

Good Imagination.

Teddy, after having a drink of plain soda water, was asked how he liked it.

"Not very well," he replied. "It tastes too much as though my foot had gone asleep in my mouth."—Success Magazine.

THE "IRON KING."

By DAVID G. HARTLEY.

[Copyright, 1910, by American Press Association.]

Hooker, the "iron king" of New York, was an irritable man and a stingy one. His business was speculating in iron, and to do this successfully he was obliged to secure information from all parts of the world as to the production, consumption, stock on hand and such other items as tended to fix the price of the metal.

Hooker gave his sister's son, Edward Earle, a position in his office. At twenty-five, though the young man was manager of that branch of the business which pertained to information, he was paid but twelve hundred a year. On this he supported his mother, a wife and two little children. He chafed under his uncle's stinginess and on one occasion asked for more salary. He was informed that if he could do better elsewhere he was welcome to go. The young man appreciated the proverb "A rolling stone gathers no moss" and remained where he was.

One day Hooker informed his clerk that he wished him to go to England to investigate the condition of the market there. He furnished the young man with a second class ticket on an ocean liner and barely enough money to pay his board and travel third class between the principal English iron manufacturing towns.

One morning Earle, who was in Sheffield, arose and while breakfasting with his paper before him saw a notice of the failure of an iron firm located in the neighboring town of Birmingham. The concern being a small one Earle attached little importance to the failure, but during the day a business acquaintance who had an interest in favoring him gave him a bit of secret information that caused him to change his mind. It was believed that the failure would involve a larger firm, that firm would involve a number of others, and the whole community of iron firms in England would go down like card houses. This would throw a large lot of iron on the market that had been held speculatively for a rise, and consequently the prices would fall considerably.

There was no Atlantic cable in those days, so Earle wrote the information he had received, giving his opinion that a crisis was at hand and advising his employer to sell at once all the iron he had on hand. The ship bearing the letter had no sooner sailed than the second firm in line failed. This caused Earle to feel still greater confidence in the information he had received, and he had no doubt that all he had heard would be realized.

The young man proved himself admirably fitted to assume responsibility. He took a risk that would make or break him. In the name of Hooker & Co.—he was not authorized to sign the firm name, but it was not known—he contracted to deliver thousands of tons of iron at a figure below the market price, the iron to be delivered in ninety days. This done, he took the first steamer that sailed for America, the one that bore the news of the iron panic in England.

On the morning of his arrival he went straight to the office. There sat Mr. Hooker at his desk with a morning paper before him. Earle caught sight of large headlines announcing the tumble of iron in England. It had been sent from Sandy Hook. Hooker was white as a sheet.

"You worthless scamp!" cried the head of the firm to his employee. "Why didn't you write of the beginning of all this? I'm ruined! I had an immense stock on hand, and, learning of a shortage on the continent, I bought more."

"I wrote by the last steamer, giving you information that pointed to this result and advised you to sell out all the stock you had."

"Your letter never came. You should have brought the information yourself."

"Are you sure about the letter?"

"James," called Hooker to a clerk, "are there any letters that have not been delivered to me?"

"There was one came, sir, a few days ago. You know that you ordered all letters on which the postage was not paid in full to be left at the postoffice. There was 8 cents due on this one, and I refused to pay it."

"Oh, heavens!" groaned Hooker.

"Was it from England?" asked Earle of the clerk.

"I think it was."

"It must have been a mistake of the clerk's at the British postoffice. I put on stamps to cover the cost as he quoted it to me."

Hooker's head dropped on his desk. Irritated some time before at receiving unstamped letters (at that time such letters were delivered), he had given orders that all mail on which any money was due should not be taken from the postoffice. For refusing to pay 8 cents he had been ruined.

"How much iron have you on hand?" asked Earle.

"A hundred thousand tons," groaned the speculator without taking his head off his desk.

"Well, Mr. Hooker, cheer up. It's not so bad, after all. I took a big risk while abroad. I sold in your name just as the panic began 125,000 tons to be delivered in ninety days."

"What!"

"I sold for you 125,000 tons at about what your stock cost you. There'll be some low figures today on the publication of this news. Perhaps I'd better go on to the exchange and buy a part of it in."

Hooker fell on his nephew's neck. There was a profit on the transaction of many thousand dollars, and from that day Earle took his uncle's place as the "iron king."

CAUGHT IN HER OWN TRAP.

A Girl Sent a Valentine to a Fellow She Didn't Know.

By HORACE HILL.

[Copyright, 1910, by American Press Association.]

My brother Tom is fifteen years older than I and a very different fellow in every way. Tom never cared anything about the girls, while I confess I always had a fancy for them. When I was fourteen I went away to boarding school and stayed until I was eighteen. I had left Tom single, and single he remained.

On my return I could see, over a high hedge that separated our place from the one adjoining, that during my absence a family had moved in there, among the members of which was a girl as pretty as a peach. She was about sixteen years old, wearing her skirts to the tops of her boots. I rather fancied she was not averse to practicing any kind of mischief that might occur to her.

This was a mere inference till St. Valentine's day came round; then it

"LET ME GO! I DON'T KNOW YOU."

became a certainty. The girl, whose name was Mary Blake, gave herself away by a very simple process. A cousin, Maud Blake, considerably older than herself and a very proper old maid, was visiting at the house. A valentine came through the mail for Mr. T. Etherton and was delivered to me. My brother's name is Tom and mine is Theodore, both initials letters being "T." Since I considered Tom too old a fogy to receive a valentine, I took the benefit of the doubt, opened and read it. There were some verses in it referring to the warmth of a middle aged heart, which convinced me that it was intended for Tom. Opening a little pocket built in it, I took out a bit of paper on which had been scrawled almost illegibly, "Maud."

It seemed rather strange to me that an elderly person like the middle aged spinster next door should send my ministerial looking brother a valentine, especially with her name on it. I was bothered for a time, then all of a sudden the whole scheme flashed upon me. The little humbug Mary was intending to perpetrate a joke on her cousin.

But I was not of an age myself to waste time in repentance for having spoiled a love story. I was busy hatching mischief myself. I racked my brain for some plan to pay the heartless Mary in her own coin, but without much success. Tom's valentine had come in the mail delivery the evening before St. Valentine's day. I said nothing to Tom about it, not intending that he should do anything to spoil any pranks I might decide to play on the perpetrator of the joke.

We have a letter box beside our front door, and that evening while coming around from the back to the front of the house I saw a figure stealing in at the gate and on tiptoe up the walk to the house. Stepping behind a tree where I would not be observed, I saw the figure—it wore a dress—go up to the letter box and slip something in. Not caring to declare myself at this stage of the proceedings I lay low and permitted the figure to flit away in the darkness. Then I dived into the letter box.

I pulled out an envelope stamped with leaves and flowers and cupids and all such things and, looking at the superscription, saw that it was for Mr. Theodore Etherton, or my own self. I opened it, expecting some kind of a decoy from the little mischief maker next door, and I was not disappointed. The missive purported to be a valentine with the harmless anonymity usual in valentines. But the recipient was invited to join the writer the next evening at 8 o'clock in a little summer house in grounds at the time vacant in rear of our place.

Here was accomplished what I had been racking my brains to invent. Miss Mary was intending to draw me to a meeting with some one who would probably turn out to be no one and doubtless from a hiding place observe my chagrin.

I don't know whether I was more delighted with the wiliness of this scheme or the innocence that was intending to perpetrate it. One thing I know; I was yearning to get the little girl encircled in my arms and heap coals of fire on her head in the shape of a volley of kisses.

The next morning from my window at the rear of the house and overlooking the summer house that was intended for the scene of my disappointment I made a careful survey of the grounds. A path led from a gate behind our yard and a path from the Blakes' yard to the summer house. Between these two paths and near to the summer house were some bushes. Miss Blake would observe me going to the rendezvous and would follow me under cover of the darkness. What, if anything, she intended to do I didn't know; but, whatever it was, it would be done from behind the bushes.

During the day I kept a sharp lookout upon the fair one next door—not an inappropriate occupation for St. Valentine's day—and observed her going about demurely, with never a smile on her face or, so far as I could see, a twinkle in her eye. To look at her one would have supposed butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. There was something fascinating in gazing upon such innocence, knowing the while that it was merely a cover for the most arrant roguishness. As for casting the least bit of a sly glance across the hedge, she seemed entirely oblivious to the fact that there was any other side to it than her own. Was there ever such duplicity concealed under so guileless an exterior?

When night came I at last was in a state of uncertainty. I could lay no plan by which to surely head her off. She had a safe retreat from the bushes over a straight path to her own back gate. The worst that could befall her was to be seen entering her own premises. But this would give me no information I did not have, and it is questionable if she would care if it were known that the decoyer lived there, since she might assume that it would not be known which one of the occupants had perpetrated the joke. What I mainly relied on was my fleetness and that I as well as she might work under cover of the darkness.

It is pretty dark at 8 o'clock in the evening on the 14th of February, and in order that Miss Molly should know that I had gone to the rendezvous I put on a light gray coat, carrying a black one in my hand. Having thus arrayed myself, I sallied forth, not doubting that I was watched by the girl next door. I had no sooner entered the summer house than I took off the light colored coat and put on the black one. Then, getting down flat on the ground, I wriggled around with a view to getting between the girl and her home. I had gone a part of the distance when I saw a silhouette against the sky running for the clump of bushes. On reaching it I heard a loud ha-ha and saw the silhouette dash like the wind for the gate. Quick as a flash I was on my feet, running for the path, and a body of flesh and blood ran right into my arms.

"Oho!" I said.

"Let me go!"

"Not just yet. I have a bone to pick with you."

"Let me go! I don't know you."

"I know you very well."

"I have not injured you."

"Yes, you have. You are my enemy."

"Let me go, I say!" And she made a vigorous effort to release herself from my grip.

"Do you know how the good book tells us to treat our enemies?"

"No, and I don't care. I want to go home."

"It tells us to love them."

She didn't struggle quite so hard after I said this, but she pretended all the same.

"You must excuse me for being frank with you. This is St. Valentine's day, and we are permitted to tell each other our feelings. I've been watching you from my side of the hedge and have noticed what a nice, pretty girl you are. You haven't ever seen me in our yard, have you?"

"No, and I don't want to see you. Let me go!"

"I will of you'll tell me one thing, and tell me truthfully. Who sent that valentine to my brother with the bit of paper in the pocket with 'Maud' on it?"

There was no answer, but a renewal of the struggle to get away. I held on tightly.

"You must tell me that and tell me who slipped the valentine in our letter box decoying me to the summer house."

As before, the only reply was more struggling.

"Well, since you don't seem disposed to buy your freedom with information on these points I'll give you another kind of chance. You must admit that a girl who deceitfully and with malice aforethought induces a fellow to meet an imaginary person in a summer house and gets caught in her own trap must expect to pay some sort of ransom. Now, we'll call it quits for one kiss."

"I supposed you were above such mean things as that."

"I didn't know that you were aware of my being your neighbor, much less understanding the traits of character I possess."

There was a bit of a giggle at this, and I took courage.

"Beggars cannot be choosers," I said. "I shall have to decide the penalty for myself without asking you what you'd rather do."

I took a kiss so quick that she had no time to defend herself. Then I opened my arms and let her go. She walked away to her home, and when she reached the gate I heard her say spitefully:

"Red head!"

"How did you happen to notice that I had a red head?" I called. "It's too dark to see it here."

I'm going to college in the autumn, and I shall take her picture with me I didn't steal it; she gave it to me.